

**Parent Voice**  
**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016**  
**The Barn Cedar Studio**

**1. Welcome and introductions**

Mr McIntosh (Deputy Head Teacher) welcomed parents and, for those who had not attended a Parent Voice meeting before, outlined the purpose and procedure of the meeting.

**2. Minutes of the last meeting and action points**

- **Individual photographs**

- The concerns shared at the last meeting had been discussed with the Infant School and a revised format for this year was being formulated in readiness for the individual photos in the Autumn term 2016.

- **In flight homework display afternoon**

- Hopefully all parents felt they had ample time to move between classrooms of siblings in the most recent display afternoon on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January. It was also encouraging to see so many parents and children visit the showcase displays in the Barn.

- **Ofsted monitoring visit report**

- Mr McIntosh had been in touch with the school's governors who would be producing a newsletter for the Spring term which would outline their monitoring activities and evaluation of the school's progress towards addressing the areas for development as identified in the Ofsted Inspection report and the Ofsted Monitoring Visit report.

- **Information for Year 3 parents**

- Mr McIntosh would be sending out a questionnaire to Year 3 parents asking for their views about transition information before Easter.

- **School dinners**

- The views expressed had been forwarded to the caterers via the school business manager.

- **Head Teacher's holiday homework**

- This had been discussed with Mr McTaggart.

- **Coding club**

- A plea for assistance for Mr Russell was going out in the newsletter today and would be repeated if necessary.

### 3. **AOB**

- **New Assessment System**

Parents were generally impressed with the new assessment system in place (this had been presented at an open meeting on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January) which was also being used as the basis for discussion at the recent Parents' Evenings. Parents liked:

- The fact that each subject was broken down into specific areas and therefore the information presented was precise
- The presentation being in graphical format, which was easy to interpret
- The additional printed information, detailing the criteria within which maths, writing and reading is assessed
- The ability of the teachers to use the data in an informed way to share information about their child's attainment and progress

- **SATS**

A discussion about SATS took place. Mr McIntosh outlined the recent changes brought in by the government and what that meant for this year's Year 6 as the first cohort to take the revised examinations. He also outlined the additional steps that the school was taking to prepare Year 6 pupils for the tests, including a full mock SATS week, newly bought revision guides and question books for use at school and at home, and the (optional) Easter booster school.

- **School dinners**

Some discussion took place about school dinners, with the following points raised:

- Some of the vegetables served with the meals seem to be on the unusual side and while children should be introduced to a variety of foods, it was noted that this is perhaps best done at home as there had been reports of a lot of waste concerning vegetables. A suggestion was made for more common vegetables to be included in the next menu more regularly, e.g. peas, carrots, sweetcorn
- The puddings do not seem to be well-liked, with reports of these being wasted.
- The menu on the school website was still that of the first half term of Autumn and parents were having to rely on the Infant School website if they had misplaced their paper copies.

Some suggestions for resolving these issues were given, such as liaising with the children and parents through discussions and/or questionnaires. A questionnaire sent out by the Infant school was recommended as being used by the Junior school as well. Mr McIntosh would investigate with Mrs Mills.

- **Abacus homework**

There are some parents who still are finding difficulty in how to resolve problems on the site to help their children with homework, for example:

- When logged on to 'My Activities', the video tutorials don't go away once watched – one child has 19 on her pupil account.

- The videos are showing as tasks and because they do not go once watched, they are making the pupil account seem like there are unfinished tasks.

It was noted that they are still not being set weekly by teachers as indicated on the new homework schedule. It was also noted that some teachers do not seem to know how to use or set the homework, following discussions at parents' evenings. Mr McIntosh made it clear that extensive training had been provided for the new Abacus scheme of work and that teachers were using it well in school to plan, prepare and assess lessons on a daily basis. He would discuss any additional training needs with teachers. Mr McIntosh reminded parents that a maths calculation workshop was being presented in the first week of the next half term (Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February) and that he could request for part of this meeting to be dedicated to exploring how to best help with the Abacus online homework.

- **Evening meetings**

A question was raised about evening meetings seeming always to fall on Thursdays and if this was a school policy. The repeated scheduling of meetings on Thursdays means that some parents always find it very difficult to attend due to work patterns or other commitments. Mr McIntosh shared that there was no policy regarding this but rather evening meetings are scheduled on particular days due to a variety of reasons that may be different from week to week depending on the availability of the staff who lead them through. It was also outlined that PTA meetings usually occur on Mondays, Governor meetings usually take place on Tuesdays and few people relish the idea of meeting on a Friday. Mr McIntosh would raise this at the next leadership team meeting so that we are more mindful about rotating days for future evening meetings.

- **Fire alarm bells**

Some children in Year 6 demountables had reported that they found it difficult to hear when the bells pealed, including fire alarm bells. There was also no link to the Barn when the main school bells pealed. Mr McIntosh said that he would investigate this but that as far as he was aware (having taught many times in all three classrooms), the bells were clear enough to hear. As for the Barn, it is on a separate fire alarm system and through the regulations involved in the building/planning process, it fully adhered to all fire prevention and alarm requirements.

#### **4. Date and time of next meeting**

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February at 8pm (tea/coffee from 7.45pm) in the Barn.